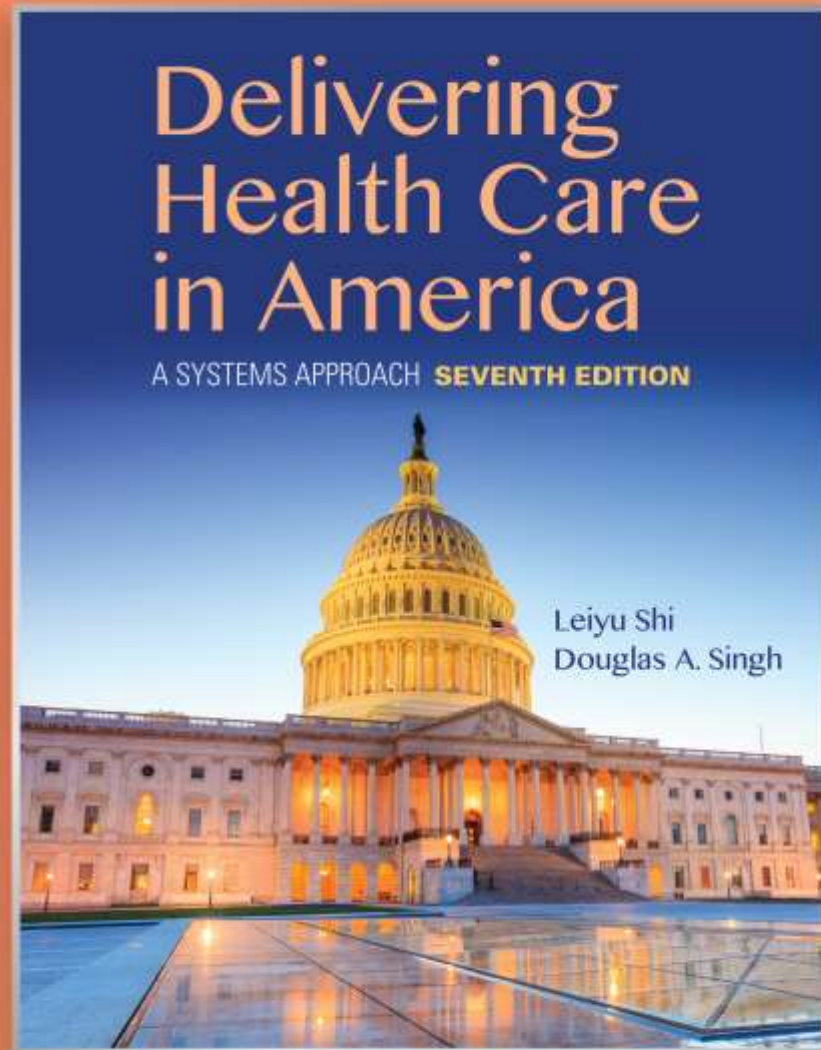


Chapter 13

Health Policy



Learning Objectives

- Definition, scope, and role of U.S. health policy
- Principal features of U.S. health policy
- Describe the legislative health policy process
- Identify critical health policy issues in the U.S.
- Passage, implementation, and repeal of the ACA from a political perspective

Introduction

- Government involvement in social welfare.
 - Traced to almshouses and pesthouses
- Social programs created under the Social Security legislation in the 1940s.
- Government has had success bringing about social change through health policy.

What Is Health Policy?

(1 of 2)

- Public policies
 - Decisions made in the legislative, executive, or judicial branches of government
 - Direct actions, behaviors, or decisions of others
- Health policy
 - Aggregate of principles, stated or unstated
 - Characterize distribution of resources, services, and political influences impacting the population

What Is Health Policy?

(2 of 2)

- Uses of policy
 - Regulatory tools
 - Allocative tools
- Different forms of health policies
 - Affect groups or classes of individuals
 - Physicians, the poor, the elderly, and children

Principal Features of U.S. Health Policy

(1 of 2)

- Government as subsidiary to the private sector
- Fragmented policies
- Incremental and piecemeal policies
- Interest groups as demanders of policy
- Pluralistic suppliers of policy
- Decentralized role of the states
- Impact of presidential leadership

Principal Features of U.S. Health Policy

(2 of 2)

- Politics of the ACA
 - Obama stated everyone would have health insurance.
 - ACA became reality following a unique set of political circumstances
 - Speed with which the reform was pushed through the legislative process
 - General public was confused and not supportive about the legislation

Development of Legislative Health Policy

- Aspects of the U.S. government and populace
 - Relationship of the government to the private sector
 - Distribution of authority and responsibility within a federal system of government
 - Relationship between policy formulation and implementation
 - A pluralistic ideology as the basis of politics
 - Incrementalism as the strategy for reform

Policy Cycle

- Comprising five components
 1. Issue raising
 2. Policy design
 3. Public support building
 4. Legislative decision making and policy support building
 5. Legislative decision making and policy implementation

Legislative Committees and Subcommittees

- Congress has three important powers
 - Power to enact laws
 - Power to tax
 - Power to spend (allocate resources)

Most Influential Committees

- Most influential House committees
 - Ways and Means Committee
 - Commerce Committee
 - Committee on Appropriations
- Most influential Senate committees
 - Committee on Labor and Human Resources
 - Committee on Finance

Legislative Process

- A bill is introduced in the House of Representatives.
- If approved it is forwarded to the Senate.
- Sent to President after passing the House and Senate
- If signed it becomes law.

Policy Implementation

(1 of 2)

- New law is forwarded to the appropriate agency of the executive branch
 - Multiple levels interpret and implement legislation
- Proposed regulations published in the *Federal Register*
 - Hearings on how law is to be implemented
- Parties may adjourn to the courts

Policy Implementation

(2 of 2)

- Implementation of the ACA
 - Twelve states had decided to create state-based health insurance exchanges.
 - Five states opted for a state-based marketplace through the federal platform.
 - Six selected state-partnership marketplaces.
 - Twenty-eight states' health insurance exchanges were created by the federal government.

Critical Policy Issues

(1 of 5)

- Most health initiatives focused on access, cost, and quality of care.
- Access to care
 - Providers
 - Integrated access
 - Access and the elderly
 - Access and minorities
 - Access in rural areas
 - Access and low income
 - Access and persons with HIV/AIDS

Critical Policy Issues

(2 of 5)

- Cost of care
 - Increasing drug prices have drawn public attention.
 - No government action taken to prevent price hiking
 - Prices of prescription drugs may continue to rise.

Critical Policy Issues

(3 of 5)

- Quality of care
 - Six areas of quality improvement
 1. Safety
 2. Effectiveness
 3. Patient centeredness
 4. Timeliness
 5. Efficiency
 6. Equity

Critical Policy Issues

(4 of 5)

- Quality of care (*continued*)
 - Research on quality
 - Malpractice reform
- Role of research in policy development
 - Documentation
 - Analysis
 - Prescription

Critical Policy Issues

(5 of 5)

- Future considerations in health policy
 - Domestic health policy
 - Initiatives to expand and evaluate primary care delivery models
 - International health policy
 - Government spending on global health initiatives is stable.

Summary

- Health policies are developed to serve the public's interests.
- Interest group politics have an influence on policy.
- Presidential leadership and party politics played a major role in the ACA passage.
- Critical policy issues pertaining to access, cost, and quality remain unresolved.